Program Planning Readiness Feedback

We know from experience that prevention works. We know, also, that sponsoring agencies, funders, and policy makers at all levels require increasingly sophisticated, evidence-based documentation of that success. It is equally important to demonstrate that your prevention efforts have meaningful impact on your organization or community. This site is intended to provide for you the tools needed to efficiently and effectively document the success of your prevention efforts.

The background information contained in this report came from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention's funded projects, the *Pathways to Effective Programs and Positive Outcomes* (referred to as the "Pathways document", and formerly known as *Achieving Outcomes: A Practitioner's Guide to Effective Prevention)* and the tools and documents contained on the Prevention Platform Web site pages. If you follow the process outlined in this report, you are likely to see measurable outcomes. You will have empirical evidence that what you are doing is accomplishing what you intended. This report will present a roadmap, showing the steps you can take toward building capacity for demonstrating and documenting outcomes. In this report we will also point you to other resources you will find useful in developing your prevention programs and practices.

This report has been tailored to give you feedback in the areas that you may find challenges in during the SPF process.

Strategic Prevention Framework				
Assessment	**Capacity**	**Planning**	**Implementation**	**Evaluation**
Assemble data collection review team, define substance abuse problem	Examine internal resources, skills, readiness	Determine domain(s) of concentration and prioritize risk and protective factors	Develop logic models for overall program, components	Report immediate & intermediate outcomes
Identify and define target population for reduction/prevention	Build collaboration through teaming and networking	Examine program/intervention options	Develop action plans for documentation	Outline process evaluation from action plans
Identify risk and protective factors		Address cultural relevancy	Document, review, improve quality	Assess long-term outcomes/
Develop tentative	Examine community	Explore	Revisit fidelity	

theory of, or pathway to, change Identify existing prevention resources that target problem & risk/protective factors Perform gap analysis of needs and resources	resources and readiness: external capacity	fidelity/adaptation balance Select "best-fit" program/ intervention Choose to innovate	and adaptation issues as necessary	general impact Communicate outcomes to key stakeholders to build support Re-measure outcomes & supplement final report if necessary

Assessment

As you do your needs analysis, you may find that the settings in which your coalition is currently providing services will need to change (e.g. to reach the expanded population you are now targeting.) Documenting your group's needs for prevention is an important part of obtaining the buy-in and support of the individuals and groups that will continue to help you meet your goals and objectives. A written needs assessment will become part of your community's strategic plan. Creating a needs assessment that documents the focus in needs over time also provides a method for you your group to share your ideas with other stakeholders, so that they have the opportunity to collaborate in the planning and implementation process, increasing the likelihood that they will continue to be or start becoming supportive participants in your program implementation.

The Pathways document will help you identify potential partners within your community, educate you about processes that will work in obtaining support for your programs and practices, and assist you in developing a theoretical framework for your prevention process. It will help you understand the risk and protective factors likely to impact your population. This site provides a practical system for locating National, State and local data sources for baseline measures. It will provide you with a structure for collecting the data, and a means of creating reports from the data. It will link you to appropriate data resources based on the indicators you have chosen for your needs assessment. It also contains a tool for creating graphical presentations of data that has been coded with geographical coordinates, such as

demographic data.

Next Steps Roadmap

Involve your program evaluator in your plan for creating a needs assessment. Consider obtaining feedback from an outside evaluator on your plan, one that is not familiar with your program, to get another perspective.

Create, from your needs assessment, documents that are aimed at particular audiences, such as a PowerPoint presentation to show to a community group, or a write up of the needs analysis to provide to school administrators to elicit their help in providing access to students for your proposed intervention.

Identify the settings in which you would like to conduct your program, and consider expanding the program to other settings. Evaluate what you anticipate working well in the setting, and what a change in settings could improve in your program.

Involve potential new partners in your planning process. Begin the process of forming a coalition, join an existing coalition with similar goals and objectives, or expand the membership of your existing coalition.

Anticipate how your theory with your interventions (program and practices) should affect the targeted individuals. Document this process. Indicate what risk and protective factors you feel your intervention will change, and how these changes will lead to a decrease in ATOD rates in the individuals involved in your program. Share your findings, both on what works as well as what does not work, with the prevention community. Find out what conferences are upcoming and offer to be a presenter. Write up your findings and send them to a journal for publication.

Assessment Resources

If you are most comfortable using a paper-based process, and/or are new to the process of developing and implementing prevention programs, you should print out the "Determine Prevention Needs and Resources" chapter of the *Pathways* document, provided here in Adobe Acrobat PDF format (formatted for printing) provided at http://about.preventiondss.org/html/documents/Pathways/Pathways_Chap1_6-03.pdf.

If you have more proficiency using a computer system, you might want to use the Web-based resources found in the Assessment section. These include a complete, step-by-step system for entering in information about your needs and for conducting searches for National, State and local data, as well as a Graphical Information Systems (GIS) tool for researching and displaying information on a map of the regions of interest.

For more information, see the Assess Your Needs Pre-organizer at

http://about.preventiondss.org/html/documents/Preorganizers/anguide.pdf, and the Assess Your Needs step-by-step tutorial at http://demo.preventiondss.org/docs/tutor/menu04.htm).

Other needs assessment resources include:

- World Health Organization Workbook No. 3 (Needs Assessment)(pdf)
- NCADI State Needs Assessment Profiles Database
- CT DMHAS Overview of a Substance Abuse Prevention Needs Assessment
- Pathways to Effective Programs and Positive Outcomes, Chapter 1, "Determine Prevention Needs and Resources" (pdf)
- Preorganization Guide to Using the Assessment Tool (pdf)
- Step-by-step Guide to Using the Assessment Tool

Capacity

Before you can effectively select substance abuse programs, it is important to examine your organization's capacity to bring about the changes that you would like. Capacity refers to the various types and levels of resources that an organization has at its disposal to meet implementation demands.

Capacity includes not only funding, but also human resources - staff or volunteers - with specific skill sets, including leadership, program development, and networking abilities, to carry out the intended intervention. You will need facilities, transportation, office supplies, equipment, and other fixed capital to ensure sufficient capacity to implement sound programs. Central to your general capacity-and the area where programs often falter-you will need management and evaluation resources. You may need to seek outside resources to augment those you already have.

Specific programs will dictate the types of capacity you will need. An absence of these resources will almost certainly jeopardize your effort. You simply will not have the tools to implement the selected prevention program(s) well. This may require you to select another program (or programs) that meets identified needs but requires fewer or different resources. You need to assess the overall capacity of your group or coalition to reach your goals and assess whether the community is ready to support the program. This part of the process ensures that the required resources will be in place when needed, whether the intervention is small and very specific, or large and comprehensive. Individual members of a coalition will also want to undertake this capacity assessment before making decisions about program selection.

It will be important to identify your capacity assessment and building plan. Establish a vision and mission statements, along with goals and objectives are vital for the success of this program.

Document any and all changes in the program, this will be useful in keeping other partners informed and involved. A newsletter or other publication that explains what your doing and that identify your goals will help to maintain cooperation and understanding with your partners, as well as keep your program in their minds (every little bit of good PR helps!)

Next Steps Roadmap

Identify program needs: staffing, facilities, training needs and costs.

Identify internal capacity: administrative, leadership.

Identify external resources-leaders, stakeholders, media, volunteers.

Identify your group's technical capacity (including managerial, administrative, evaluation skills).

Compare your current capacity to your current needs.

Establish a group that will research opportunities and can write future grant proposals.

Use the Capacity tool, located under the tab at the top of the screen, to increase your readiness in this area and to begin documenting your efforts.

Capacity Resources

- [Community Tool Box Resource](#)
- [Community Readiness Model](#)
- [Pathways to Effective Programs and Positive Outcomes, Chapter 2, "Build Capacity" (pdf)](#)
- [Preorganization Guide to Using the Capacity Tool (pdf)](#)
- [Step-by-step Guide to Using the Capacity Tool](#).

Planning

Define your client base, you may need to consider alternative programs to those you have previously identified to fit within the logic model. You will need to evaluate the cost of potential programs versus the expected benefits.

Once your program is up and running, you are in the unique position of being able to evaluate its effectiveness, comparing the actual changes to the expected changes. In areas in which change was predicted by your theoretical model, but change did not occur (or change was not significantly large), you will want to re-examine your practices and model and either adapt your program or change your objectives.

To identify programs or interventions that meet the standards you have set for your program look to those that have been designated by SAMHSA as a **model programs** through its National Registry of Effective Prevention (NREP). Model and effective programs are SAMHSA's gold standard. They share good theory and program components linked to that theory, implementation standards that have been replicated over time, and good evaluation methodology that has consistently documented positive outcomes. In short, their effectiveness is scientifically defensible. Model programs are particularly attractive because their developers have put together the materials necessary for "off-the-shelf" implementation. In many cases, the developers also are available for consultation and technical assistance. Listings of these programs are available on SAMHSA's Web site at www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov.

SAMHSA's NREP also categorizes substance abuse prevention/reduction programs as "promising." While promising programs have not been as rigorously implemented/evaluated as effective and model programs, the quality of design and research is of sufficient rigor that positive outcomes are observed and the programs are included in SAMHSA's registry of evidence-based programs. **Evidence-based programs** are best because they are theory driven, have activities related to the theory of change underlying the whole program model, and have been reasonably well implemented and well evaluated. They have been shown to produce empirically verifiable outcomes, which are assumed to be positive. This is important to funders, your community, and the field as a whole.

When you do locate candidate programs, you should review these programs using six important criteria:

1. Is the program consistent with your mission?
2. Does the program address your goals and objectives?
3. Is the program within your capacity to implement?
4. Is the program culturally relevant to your situation?
5. Has the program been designated as scientific and effective?
6. If the program has not been designated as scientific and effective, does it meet the principles of effectiveness for prevention programming?

Next Steps Roadmap

Use your evaluator to work with the program developers to point out the areas in which fidelity needs to be focused.

Use the Planning tool, located under the tab at the top of the screen, to increase your readiness in this area and to begin documenting your efforts.

Planning Resources

- [National Registry of Effective Programs (NREP)](#)
- [Western CAPT: Link to Best Practices by Ethnicity](#)
- [Pathways to Effective Programs and Positive Outcomes, Chapter 3, "Select/Adapt/Innovate Programs" (pdf)](#)
- [Preorganization Guide to Using the Planning Tool (pdf)](#)
- [Step-by-step Guide to Using the Planning Tool.](#)

Implementation

One of the main objective with the SPF SIG is to assure you have found a program that meets your objectives.

There is always room for improvement in any program implementation. Better consolidation of resources, a different means of assessing your process, additional training, and many other small or large changes may improve your program outcomes. Once you begin always look for improvements throughout the program:

- Are you having problems retaining staff?
- Morale issues?
- Funding problems?
- Areas in which your evaluation is too time consuming for what you obtain?
- Holes in your evaluation?
- Fidelity problems in some aspects of your implementation?
- Lack of buy-in from the community?

Prioritizing the areas that could be improved and making a plan for the improvement will help you continuously improve your program and practices.

After completion of the activities for each component, you should record the actual amount of change. This will be the change between the baseline measure and your subsequent measures of the underlying condition the component was designed to address. This is actually part of the evaluation process and may be one of your evaluator's tasks, depending on how your evaluation team is organized.

Should actual outcomes fall short of your expectations, examine your plans. Look for problems encountered during implementation. Review planned (or unplanned) adaptations. Consider cultural issues. A team meeting that includes the staff member responsible for the

component in question may yield insight about why expectations were not met.

A problem of unmet expectations may stem not from the implementation process itself but from the initial needs and resources assessment, which may have failed to dig deep enough into the needs of your defined population. A detailed, thoroughly documented action plans allows you not only see where you are going but where you have been. You can retrace your steps to explain why a component did or did not work as expected.

Make sure to involve your evaluator early on in the implementation process. Evaluation works best as a team effort. One person heads the team and has primary responsibility for the project with assistance from other staff and volunteers.

Your evaluation team can help pinpoint any problems that you may be having, and highlight those areas in which your program is running smoothly. You will never be able to evaluate completely every aspect of your program; your evaluation team will be able to help you decide on priorities for evaluation and understand the costs of the effort involved, so that you can choose to spend your evaluation dollars where they will produce the greatest effect.

Think of your logic models and the action plan for each component as living documents, to be reviewed regularly and modified when necessary. Your implementation team should routinely review the plans to see if you are on target or if mid-course adjustments are needed. The process that is popular in business circles, known as **Continuous Quality Improvement** (CQI), may help.

Regular review of your program and component logic models and, especially, your action plans should be systemized within your organization. This is a crucial step in the success of your implementation, as well as your evaluation. Routine review enables you to do the following:

- Document program components that work well
- Identify where improvements need to be made
- Provide feedback to staff or others who can implement the strategies more effectively
- Make timely adjustments in activities and programming to better address the desired outcomes
- Provide information for keeping others informed (including the media), if applicable
- Determine if enough resources have been leveraged.

Routine review of your action plans can prevent you from proceeding with a program that is not working. It provides feedback on day-to-day operations, which enables you to make timely adjustments in programming and activities to ensure a more direct path to the outcomes you seek.

Next Steps Roadmap

Review your evaluation results and examine your program fidelity: is it as good as it can be? Do you need to invest in additional training, or develop better training materials?

Look for improvements throughout the program: are you having problems retaining staff? Morale issues? Funding problems? Areas in which your evaluation is too time consuming for what you obtain? Holes in your evaluation? Lack of buy-in from the community?

Use the Implementation tool, located under the tab at the top of the screen, to increase your readiness in this area and to begin documenting your efforts.

Implementation Resources

- [Guidelines for Balancing Program Fidelity/Adaptation](#)
- [Guidelines and Benchmarks for Prevention Programming: Implementation Guide (pdf)](#)
- [Pathways to Effective Programs and Positive Outcomes, Chapter 4, "Implement and Assess Programs" (pdf)](#)
- [Step-by-step Guide to Using the Implementation Tool.](#)

Evaluation

The purpose of an evaluation is to improve your program and practices. A good evaluation can pinpoint the areas in which you need improvement, and highlight those areas that went well, both of which are important to your continued success (e.g. help you do more of the things that are effective, and less of the things that are not).

Some of the problems typically encountered in evaluations are due to errors in the evaluation design. The design needs to produce findings that show a clear connection between the program and the outcomes. It's important to be able to demonstrate that the results can be attributed to the program itself, rather than to something else, such as other community events, or changes in the target audience. Many of the mistakes made in evaluation may be avoided by doing the following:

- Use data collection tools that have been tested.
- Obtain solid baseline, or "pre-intervention" information.
- Use a comparison group of people not receiving the intervention, whenever possible. These people should have similar characteristics to the people exposed to the intervention.
- Monitor the integrity of the program implementation.
- Use appropriate statistical methods to analyze the data.

Every analysis you perform leads to ideas for better ways to conduct the same analysis on your next round, and ideas on other things that it would be useful to know. You may also find more efficient ways to complete an analysis or parts of an evaluation that can be eliminated.

Reporting your findings is important to the field. If you have replicated a model program with fidelity, and had poor results, reporting this is as important as reporting what you did in a program that had a large affect on your participants. Reading the reports of other programs can help your program improve over time as you take these "lessons learned" and apply them to your own program. If you have innovated a new program and have findings, you should consider submitting them to the National Registry of Effective Programs for dissemination.

As you implement and evaluate the objectives in your programmatic effort, you will also need to create awareness of, and support for, your efforts by the broader community. A strategic communication plan is an invaluable tool for planning and communicating your needs and successes to the community and to community stakeholders at all levels. A strategic communication plan can help you-

- Identify the key groups and members of your community who can assist in carrying out and sustaining your efforts to effect community-wide change
- Divide these groups and individuals into audience segments that you can target with messages carefully tailored to their interests and concerns
- Identify communication venues (letters, newsletters, newspaper, radio, TV, billboards, door hangers, etc.) that will cost-effectively reach each audience segment
- Establish expected measurable outcomes so you can ascertain if you are reaching your target audiences.

As you work to deliver your messages to various key audiences, be sure to craft interesting messages, especially those that put a human face on your successful outcomes, not just a summary of evaluation data. Yes, the data is important. The community does want to know the facts and figures of substance abuse reduction and prevention. However, prevention success stories that tell how your program affected specific participants can be a powerful tool for educating key stakeholders who can champion your efforts with funders and other community groups. These stories let everyone know that prevention works and is a vital community activity.

Next Steps Roadmap

Review your previously collected data and analyses and create a plan for improving data collection and analysis.

Use the results from your analysis to revisit your needs analysis, program selection, and program implementation. Revise your models as needed.

Publish your evaluation results.

Collect, keep organized, and retain data from throughout the life of your program